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Rio de Janeiro Platform for Action on the Road to Johannesburg, 2002*

The ministers and representatives of the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean gathered in Rio de Janeiro on 23 and 24 October 2001 to participate in the Regional Preparatory Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002, hereby:

A. Reaffirmation of principles and commitments

1. **Recall** the commitments made at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Mexico City in March 1991, and at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development itself, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

2. **Reaffirm** the principles and objectives set forth in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; Agenda 21; the non-legally binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol; the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa; the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and the Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

3. **Reaffirm also** the principles and objectives set forth in the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that

* As adopted at the meeting of ministers and representatives of the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean on 23 and 24 October 2001, Rio de Janeiro.

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Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which have laid the foundations for the various international instruments adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and thereafter.

4. **Further reaffirm** the Declaration of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States approved in Barbados in 1994 and the subregional conventions and agreements which grew out of the Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

5. **Recall also** the commitments made during the World Summit on Social Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the important contribution they have made to the enhanced implementation of Agenda 21, bearing in mind the need for more effective integration of economic and social development and environmental protection strategies within the sustainable development framework.

6. **Reaffirm** the sovereign right of all States to exploit their own resources pursuant to their environmental and development policies, in accordance with principles 2 and 13 as set forth in the Rio Declaration.

7. **Reiterate** their commitment to the precautionary principle defined in the Rio Declaration as a key component of environmental policy.

8. **Reiterate also** their commitment to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, according to which the developed countries should assume a proportionally greater share of responsibility for ensuring sustainable development.

B. Obstacles and lessons learned

9. **Consider** the World Summit on Sustainable Development a unique opportunity to evaluate progress in meeting the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It is acknowledged that significant ground has been gained with regard to awareness raising and the codification of environmental law. Ten years later, however, the conditions for sustainable development are no better than those that prevailed in 1992. There has been a dramatic increase in the size of the world's population living in poverty, development needs are more pressing than ever, the deterioration of the environment has worsened and the rapid pace of globalization poses new challenges for sustainability and, especially, for equity.

10. **Believe** that the strengthening of democratic institutions throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region, the advances made in peace processes in some countries of the region and greater public awareness have helped to incorporate the environmental dimension into the development process and to make people-centred sustainable development the first priority of the political, economic and social programmes of the States of Latin America and the Caribbean.

11. **Recognize** the importance of the transparent and jointly responsible participation of civil society, including the main groups identified in Agenda 21, in the design, implementation and follow-up of sustainable development policies and of regional and international commitments on these matters, and that it is essential

to strengthen the cultural, educational and environmental training base that makes it possible to engage civil society in the achievement of sustainable development.

12. **Recognize also** that, 10 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and given the new global events and challenges that are affecting our peoples and environment, progress needs to be made in laying the foundations for a new ethic that will serve as the cornerstone of sustainable development.

13. **Emphasize** that the persistence of unsustainable production and consumption patterns and the negative impacts of some trade and financial mechanisms, especially in the developed countries, seriously jeopardize the achievement of sustainable development throughout the world, and **reiterate** the need to increase the efforts being made to comply with the provisions of the relevant international instruments.

14. **Regret** that, although the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region have made progress in promoting a more favourable environment for technology transfer and for new clean, energy-efficient approaches to production — together with the corresponding technical knowledge — particularly through the establishment of suitable systems for the protection of intellectual property, the developed countries have not adopted effective measures for ensuring transfers of, in particular, the most appropriate technologies in terms of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

15. **Recognize** that the viability of sustainable development in the region requires a stable, predictable, open and inclusive international economic system, in which the environmental dimension is acknowledged as an opportunity for investment and trade.

16. **Reject** any principle or policy that distorts international trade, investment or capital flows and **urge** that all export subsidies be eliminated, that market access be substantively improved and that national forms of support that distort trade or production be reduced with a view to their eventual elimination.

17. **Voice** their concern regarding the possible conditionality which developed countries could impose by linking environmental standards to the approval of official export credits.

18. **Express their concern** as to the importance of averting an abusive interpretation of the precautionary approach on the part of the industrialized countries which might lead them to use trade policy measures as a vehicle for arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or as a disguised restriction on international trade (principles 12 and 15).

19. **Recognize** the need to streamline the organizations, forums and initiatives devoted to promoting sustainable development, as well as the need to rationalize the calendar of meetings related to the sustainable development agenda, in order to ensure most efficient and effective use of resources in servicing these meetings, and **underscore** also the need to help strengthen developing countries' capacity to implement policies and fulfil commitments undertaken within those frameworks.

20. **Recognize** the importance of regional initiatives to promote sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

21. **Recognize also** the special needs of regional and subregional ecosystems, including arid and semi-arid, mountain, forest, marine, aquatic and island ecosystems, which are rich and diverse but generally fragile as well, together with the importance of ensuring their conservation, protection and sustainable use.

22. **Acknowledge and identify** with the concern of the United Nations, which, on the basis of the guidelines established in chapter 13 of Agenda 21, has declared 2002 the International Year of Mountains, bearing in mind that the importance of mountain ecosystems derives not only from their great vulnerability, but also from their role as the source of important resources for the future of humankind, such as water, energy, biological diversity, mineral resources, cultural diversity and leisure, in addition to providing a physical space for many populations.

23. **Renew also** their commitment to the Global Environment Facility and other major multilateral finance agencies, which should broaden the criteria they use in selecting issues and activities that qualify for financing with a view to addressing areas prioritized by developing countries.

C. Present considerations

24. **Believe** that extreme poverty, environmental degradation, underdevelopment, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and the lack of equity in income distribution impact all the countries in the international community, particularly developing countries, and that it is in this light that international cooperation should be regarded as a unifying element for the efforts of the peoples and Governments of the entire world to build a common objective: to improve the living conditions of present and future generations.

25. **Reiterate** that multidimensional efforts to develop national and regional capacities should be promoted with a view to reinforcing regional and subregional cooperation schemes and meeting the needs of developing countries and the most vulnerable groups and regions.

26. **Recall** that during the special session of the United Nations General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of Agenda 21, it was seen that globalization was manifesting itself as an uneven phenomenon that has both a positive and negative influence on all societies, that some of its negative effects — such as economic and financial instability, social exclusion and depletion of national resources — have increased since then, especially in some developing countries, and therefore **urge** that policies and measures be adopted to facilitate equitable economic development by incorporating all social actors and protecting natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

27. **Emphasize** that in order to further sustainable development, social, economic and environmental policies need to be integrated so that trends that threaten human beings' quality of life can be reversed before they become irreversible and so that a sharp increase in the costs for society can be avoided, and that the ongoing degradation of the environment must be stopped by means of measures designed to mitigate the negative effects of economic and social development and to ensure the existence of a sustainable bond between humankind and nature.

28. **Recognize** the need to promote wider understanding, acceptance and application of the integrative sustainable development approach, particularly among

policy makers at the local, national and regional levels, which entails, as a matter of urgency, the participatory development of the foundations for a new ethic, and **recognize also** the need to promote a culture of sustainable development among communities, civil society and the private sector through education and public awareness strategies.

29. **Highlight** the importance of ensuring that the diffusion of scientific knowledge, the promotion of research, and the development of clean technologies serve the needs of the international community, especially of the developing countries, in regard to decision-making and policy formulation for sustainable development.

30. **Recognize** that scientific research, technological innovation, and new information and communications technologies can be instrumental in the formulation of economic, social and environmental policies, and should therefore be promoted and facilitated through regional and international cooperation.

31. **Recognize also** that indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources constitute an important group for the sustainable production and consumption of goods and services, and that they should therefore participate in the design of policies and actions to achieve sustainable development; that the use and enjoyment of natural resources in the places in which they live should be approached with respect; and that their knowledge, innovations and practices should be legally protected and that continual feedback which benefits all concerned should thus be established.

32. **Recognize** that gender equality has been fundamental in advancing efforts to achieve sustainable development and that the full participation of women in policy formulation and implementation should be strengthened at the local, national, regional and global levels.

33. **Believe** that, in order to deal with the serious environmental damage and extreme poverty that persist in many countries, the actions of the international community in promoting sustainable development should be precise, efficient and effective.

D. Future commitments

The ministers and representatives of the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean gathered in Rio de Janeiro on 23 and 24 October 2001 to participate in the Regional Preparatory Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002, hereby decide:

1. Institutional structure for sustainable development

34. **To develop** local, national and regional capacities through a lasting strategic alliance among all development actors so that advantage can be taken at the local level of the potential of globalization through an exchange of experiences and best practices within and between countries, the promotion of formal and informal education for national and local leaders, and support for applied research and technological innovation at all levels.

35. **To promote** the reinforcement of open public and private institutions and clearly defined standards that will help all individual and collective actors to forge their own development process and strengthen institutional links among economic, social and environmental policies with the participation of the population, as set forth in Agenda 21, through national sustainable development councils.

36. **To strengthen** regional institutions in relation to the design and implementation of programmes and projects to promote the integration of economic, social and environmental policies through the organization of workshops, forums, high-level conferences and South-South cooperation programmes.

37. **To promote** more efficient ways of addressing the issue of sustainable development in multilateral forums through the use of flexible, suitable mechanisms for rationalizing efforts and the use of resources more fully and through the promotion of synergies among the relevant conventions, as set forth in Agenda 21, by national sustainable development councils, among others, in order to articulate economic, social and environmental policies with the participation of the population.

38. **To support**, in this regard, the efforts being made by the United Nations Environment Programme to examine and structure environmental policy and governance, while taking care not to impinge upon the jurisdictions or objectives of the different multilateral environmental agreements, in order to generate greater synergies among them and to assess the possible standardization and harmonization of reporting requirements and procedures for their implementation.

39. **To reaffirm** the importance of achieving greater consistency and coordination among environmental, social and economic strategies and policies and, to that end, **to invite**, among other institutions, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to continue and to increase their support for the countries to help achieve that integration and to strengthen cooperation mechanisms at the global and regional levels.

2. Financing and technology transfer

40. **To urge** the international community in general and the developed countries in particular to allocate a sufficient, predictable level of new and additional resources in order to ensure the effective implementation of Agenda 21, particularly chapters 33 and 34, and of other international agreements.

41. **To reiterate** the importance of the developed countries meeting the commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GNP to cooperation for development in the rest of the world.

42. **To define** economic and fiscal incentives that effectively encourage the participation of the private sector in public schemes to promote sustainable development and correct market failures that have a negative impact on the sustainability of development.

43. **To call upon** the major contributors to redouble their efforts to ensure that the Global Environment Facility will have additional concessional funds in the future and that those resources will be allocated and administered in a more transparent, efficient and timely manner.

44. **To recognize** that the burden of debt and debt servicing faced by many countries of the region, particularly in the face of declining official development assistance and their limited ability to attract new financing and investment, have continued to undermine strategies to mobilize resources for sustainable development; **to note** with concern that debt-to-output ratios in heavily indebted countries have not seen significant improvement; and **to underscore** the need for renewed consideration of the possibility of creating mechanisms to relieve the burden of highly-indebted countries, as well as the need to increase, through the creation of new, innovative financial instruments, concessional multilateral funding for the implementation of sustainable development programmes.

45. **To recommend** that the participants in the International Conference on the Financing of Development to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, address the need to explore innovative and more effective mechanisms for financing the protection of national public goods that afford global benefits and that they propose means of linking the environmental dimension with countries' fiscal policies in order to effectively incorporate financial sectors into the effort to achieve sustainable development goals.

46. **To reaffirm** that developing countries can succeed in fulfilling their international commitments regarding sustainable development only if they have access to adequate financing and technology transfers, bearing in mind that the promotion of development and the eradication of poverty are the overriding priorities for developing countries.

47. **To underline** the fact that given the existing complementarities among trade, investment, environmental quality, social well-being, growth, the benefits of the sustainable use of natural resources and the formation of an open and inclusive world economic system, the environmental dimension constitutes an opportunity rather than a barrier to investment and trade.

48. **To ensure** market access for developing countries' products as an essential factor in sustainable development and **to promote** the competitiveness of developing-country goods and services that are handled and produced in a sustainable manner.

49. **To emphasize** the need to recommend at the Summit that multinational corporations adopt international principles and standards of social responsibility with regard to the environment and sustainable development, and that they set up regular mechanisms and procedures for reporting to the appropriate bodies.

50. **To call for** steps to be taken at the Summit to be held in Johannesburg to foster the establishment of effective means of facilitating technology transfer and new approaches to production under more favourable conditions, in keeping with principle 9 of the Rio Declaration, based, in particular, on the establishment by developed countries of financial mechanisms and preferential forms of tax treatment.

3. Formulation of actions

51. **To call upon** all countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity as soon as possible so that it can serve as a key instrument for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the

achievement of a just and equitable share of the benefits afforded by the use of genetic resources.

52. **To ensure** equitable access to the benefits afforded by the use of genetic resources through the implementation of national and international regulatory schemes for this purpose, taking into account all rights pertaining to these resources and technologies, and through appropriate financing and the transfer of relevant technologies.

53. **To foster** cooperation aimed at achieving the conservation and sustainable management of the region's natural ecosystems for the purpose of deepening world commitments to conserve biodiversity in situ and to work to establish sustainable development plans in those ecosystems which incorporate, at the local level, the agreements that figure in all the relevant conventions and that provide for the creation and reinforcement of protected areas and biological corridors and for the promotion of sustainable production activities.

54. **To call for** the design of a strategy for the sustainable development of mountain ecosystems that promotes the comprehensive management of land, bodies of water and living resources through an ecosystemic approach to the prevention of natural disasters.

55. **To underline** the need to preserve, support and protect traditional knowledge as an important part of the efforts being made to ensure the harmonious development and use of natural resources in order to promote the achievement of sustainable development objectives.

56. **To call upon** the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme to support a participatory discussion among the various actors of Latin American and Caribbean society regarding the ethical foundation for sustainable development.

57. **To urge** the international community to continue its efforts to implement and secure the early entry into force, as universally as possible, of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, bearing in mind national constitutional procedures, with a view to ensuring that it enters into effect before the World Summit on Sustainable Development is convened.

58. **To strengthen** national and regional regulatory and institutional structures relating to biosafety.

59. **To underscore** the importance of assessing vulnerability and quantifying the progress made towards sustainable development; **to note** the lack of data and indicators that would permit such measurements; and **to stress** the need to develop a core set of data and indicators, including a vulnerability index, that will make it possible to measure progress towards sustainable development, taking into account the unique features of Caribbean countries and in keeping with Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action.

60. **To reduce** the level of vulnerability to natural disasters based on planning instruments such as ecological and economic land management; and **to promote** a culture of risk awareness to further their prevention and mitigation through educational processes and improved information and early warning systems while encouraging participation on the part of civil society.

61. **To strengthen** subregional and regional cooperation, including the participation of national and international financial sectors, particularly in monitoring systems and in improving the effectiveness of reconstruction works, with special emphasis on small island developing States.

62. **To call for** recognition of the high degree of vulnerability of the small island developing States of the Caribbean; and, consequently, **to devote greater attention** to the Barbados Programme of Action and **to channel** resources for its implementation, especially with respect to adaptation to climate change, the stewardship of marine and coastal resources, integrated waste management, the protection of water resources and an increase in their quantity and quality, and the development of sustainable forms of tourism.

63. **To establish** a regional strategy containing medium- and long-term actions to prevent and respond to emergencies deriving from El Niño.

64. **To promote** integrated basin management, with emphasis on cross-sectoral, decentralized management conducted from an ecosystemic vantage point, and a change in the culture and in the social perception of the value of water; and **to align** economic and market mechanisms with the increasing degree of scarcity by adopting indirect instruments to supplement direct regulation and achieve the effective management and conservation of water resources.

65. **To enhance** international cooperation schemes at the global, regional and subregional levels, particularly in shared ecosystems, and to increase coordination among the many different levels and actors involved in water management.

66. **To support** international cooperation for sustainable forest management, taking related economic and commercial aspects into account; and **to promote** the implementation of the plan of action formulated by the United Nations Forum on Forests.

67. **To strengthen** schemes for cooperation with indigenous and local communities embodying relevant traditional lifestyles for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity with the aim of promoting programmes and financial resources to ensure their full participation.

68. **To underscore** the need to diversify the energy supply and foster energy efficiency, to assess the potential of conventional sources and to increase the share of renewable sources and the need for greater support in this area from financial agencies in order to meet the needs of each country.

69. **To establish** long-term synergies between the region's energy policies and environmental policies in order to achieve greater energy efficiency and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote the use of clean technologies.

70. **To call upon** all the countries that have not yet done so to expedite their ratification, taking into account their national constitutional procedures, of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with a view to ensuring its entry into force prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

71. **To promote and enhance** regional and international climate-change adaptation programmes that will further and complement national efforts and **to consider** undertaking efforts to reinforce adaptive capacities in the most vulnerable

areas, taking into account the work and decisions of conferences held by the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

72. **To promote** policies for strengthening land management as a means of contributing to the sustainable development of biodiversity.

73. **To call upon** all countries to ratify the Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and to support the Bahia Declaration and the Priorities for Action beyond 2000 adopted by the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety in view of their significance for the solution of problems caused by chemical contamination and its effects on human health and the environment.

74. **To underscore** the importance of a healthy population for the achievement of sustainable development because of the impact of health on quality of life and productivity levels; **to emphasize** the need to devote greater attention to strengthening the health sector, including the improvement of synergy between environment and health policies; **to call upon** the international community to assist in strengthening national capacity in this area, bearing in mind the formidable challenges in this sector, notably the increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

75. **To recognize** that the regional rate of population growth, together with demographic trends in the region, including the high rates of rural-urban migration, has resulted in rapid, often unplanned urbanization which increases the level of stress on natural resources, including water and energy, overburdens infrastructure for pollution control, sanitation and solid waste management, and undermines strategies for the prevention of forest destruction, soil erosion, and land degradation; and **to underscore** the need for more effective urban planning and land management with a view to improving human settlements in the region and reducing the risk of man-made disasters in the face of the extreme natural events that have occurred.

76. **To recognize and identify** the relationship between population and the environment and **to achieve** greater interaction among institutions at the national and international levels that deal with population and environmental issues; and **to promote** access to additional financial resources for activities aimed at the analysis and development of the link between the environment and population.

77. **To further** an environmentally sustainable form of urban management linked to more rational production and consumption patterns that are associated with the reduction of emissions and the generation of less waste; and **to establish** more effective mechanisms for urban planning and for augmenting waste-water treatment facilities.

78. **To emphasize** that the achievement of sustainable development and the improvement of the quality of life will require more effective integration of environmental, social and economic components of public policies, programmes and projects at the local, national, regional and international levels.

79. **To call upon** the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme to follow up on the agreements reached at this meeting and to continue to do so with respect to the global sustainable development agenda in accordance with their mandates and capabilities.

80. **To declare** that the countries and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean regard the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a unique opportunity to evaluate the progress made at all levels in fulfilling the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to undertake new, effective actions aimed at full compliance with those commitments and at meeting the future challenges entailed in achieving sustainable development.

81. **To propose** that the agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development accord high priority to, inter alia, the cross-sectoral issues of finance, science and technology, capacity-building and vulnerability.

82. **To call upon** the international community to reaffirm its commitment and political will so that, through a renewed form of cooperation within a spirit of solidarity, and based on the recognition of a responsible, ethical relationship between human beings and nature, effective action can be taken at the local, national, regional and global levels to ensure the full implementation of existing agreements for sustainable development, as this is the best guarantee of a more just world within a context of global peace; and, in the light of these considerations, to **propose** the following central theme for the World Summit on Sustainable Development: "Towards a new globalization which ensures that development is sustainable, equitable and inclusive".